



CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

17 November 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR: Dr. Henry A. Kissinger

SUBJECT: CIA Press Comment on Chilean Army Crisis

1. In your memorandum of 14 November, you asked for an explanation of the Statement made by a CIA spokesman in connection with the Chilean Army crisis.

2. This unfortunate episode derived out of a misunderstanding -- in short, poor communication -- between the Agency officer who answers press queries and myself. As a result of this incident, I have instituted a new procedure designed to prevent any recurrence.

3. A word of explanation: For several years prior to 1969, the Agency had been plagued by statements to the press from anonymous Department of State officials indicating "an intelligence failure" virtually every time there was an unexpected major development in some foreign country (e.g., a coup, an assassination). To counter this, we responded to press inquiries by off-the-record reactions designed to set the record straight where possible. In connection with the Chilean Army crisis, there had been considerable reporting predicting the events as they subsequently unfolded. I discussed this with the Agency officer referred to above in case he got any press inquiries. He simply misunderstood my wishes, and made his reply on the record.

4. As soon as I noted in the newspaper what had happened, I called Charles Meyer and Robert McCloskey at the Department of State to explain the origins of the "blooper". There was little more to be done at that point about this distressing affair.

5. As I said above, we have adopted means for preventing future internal misunderstandings of this type.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Dick".

Richard Helms
Director